UNITED NATIONS **DP**

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/CP/NER/5/EXTENSION I
24 February 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Second regular session of 1998
20-24 April 1998, New York
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
UNDP

UNDP: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

EXTENSION OF THE FIFTH PROGRAMME FOR THE NIGER

I. JUSTIFICATION

1. The fifth country programme, covering the period 1992-1996, was approved by the Governing Council at its thirty-ninth session (1992). UNDP cooperation was structured around four major themes: (a) environmental management and natural resources conservation; (b) human resources development; (c) enhancement of economic management capacities; and (d) promotion of the private sector.

2. UNDP support for programmes relating to the above-mentioned areas gave rise to a number of significant results. In the area of natural resources management, UNDP action strengthened capacities in the areas of land management and water resources planning. It also resulted in considerable transfers of technology. In the area of economic management, UNDP contributions resulted in the production of essential data for economic policy formulation and monitoring. On the other hand, efforts to promote the private sector have produced few lasting effects thus far, owing, inter alia, to the slow pace of structural reforms.

3. Although considerable progress has been made in the programming process, it is necessary to take into account the fluidity of the political situation over the past several years, during which a number of Governments have succeeded each other. In 1996, this process culminated in a change of head of State and, in consequence, a change of government staff, among whom a succession of changes has also taken place. Moreover, the events of 1996 prompted some of the Niger's main donors and development partners to suspend the actual provision of assistance, though most of them remained in the country.

4. The preparation of the first country cooperation framework began near the end of the fifth programme, as the framework was to have been approved during 1997. However, the process was interrupted and delayed several times owing to various factors, such as changes in the government counterpart staff and the need to reformulate some of the documentation. The institutional framework is marked by recurrent social and political tensions, inadequate management of public affairs and a low rate of participation by civil society in the development process. The Administrator therefore approved the extension of the programme for 1997, as requested by the Government, and hereby so informs the Executive Board.

5. The extension of the fifth programme for the period from January 1998 to December 1998 would make it easier to identify future assistance requirements in the Niger and to refocus efforts accordingly. In this connection, negotiations are under way with the Bretton Woods institutions, and a round table on poverty will be held on 10 and 11 March 1998.

II. OBJECTIVES

6. The four areas of concentration of the fifth country programme and the activities described above are still valid and will be pursued during the period of the extension, with particular emphasis on the preparation of the first country cooperation framework.

7. To maximize the benefits of the lessons learned from past assistance, to take fully into account the challenges to be met in relation to the institutional framework and to draw upon the conclusions and results of the round-table conference, with a view to refocusing UNDP support under the first cooperation framework, UNDP intends to send to the Niger, immediately after the round-table conference, a technical support mission consisting of representatives of various technical departments at headquarters. This mission will assist the field office in formulating the first cooperation framework for the elaboration of a coherent programme from a sustainable human development perspective.

III. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

8. In addition to the results noted in paragraph 2, and particularly since 1995, UNDP has provided significant support to the Government in the areas of policy dialogue and improvement of aid coordination, at a time when the country was facing major political and economic upheavals. UNDP acted as a facilitator in discussions between the Government and development partners following the 1996 coup d'état, and has supported the national authorities' efforts towards democratization and consolidation of the peace process in the northern part of the country. UNDP played a key role among the Niger's development partners in helping to formulate the development policies and strategies which now serve as frameworks for joint action. It should also be noted that UNDP provided a number of inputs for the national debate on poverty elimination, such as the publication, in 1997, of the first national report on sustainable human

development and the preparation of the round-table conference on poverty reduction to be held in Geneva in early 1998.

9. The mid-term review of the UNDP cooperation programme, conducted at the end of 1995, drew important lessons for the preparation of the cooperation framework. First, UNDP support suffered from a significant dispersion of initiatives in both sectoral and geographical terms, making such initiatives hard to monitor and causing their impact to fall short of expectations. UNDP assistance should focus on a small number of key strategies that reflect national priorities in the area of sustainable human development. This approach will henceforth be facilitated by the work accomplished in formulating national strategies and programmes.

10. Second, UNDP assistance should be oriented more towards building the capacities of the population, local associations and grass-roots organizations. In supporting the implementation of development programmes, UNDP should take a truly participatory approach through which responsibilities are shared by all national partners and their capacity to manage the development process is strengthened in a sustainable manner.

11. Third, the implementation of national execution has been hindered by number of constraints, including the insufficient capacities of the national administration. This weakness is related to the lack of skilled human resources, the disorganization of the public services, the staff's lack of motivation and insufficient financing. National execution must be undertaken carefully, in a suitable framework, and must be accompanied by the development of mechanisms through which the public services' execution capacities can be progressively strengthened. In this connection, UNDP should continue to call upon the support of the United Nations specialized agencies, where necessary, while also making use of national expertise.

12. Lastly, UNDP should continue and strengthen its participation in the dialogue on sustainable human development policies, as well as its assistance in the process of aid coordination and resource mobilization in the service of national priorities. UNDP should also continue to help formulate, guide an d monitor national development strategies and programmes.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

13. The Administrator recommends that the Executive Board approve the extension of the fifth programme for the Niger for one year beginning in January 1998.

Annex

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION TARGET TABLE FOR THE NIGER (1997-1998)

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Source	Amount	Comments
UNDP CORE FUNDS		
Estimated IPF carry-over	(731)	
TRAC 1.1.1	7 052	Assigned immediately to country.
TRAC 1.1.2	0 to 66.7 per cent of TRAC 1.1.1	This range of percentages is presented for initial planning purposes only. The actual assignment will depend on the availability of high-quality programmes. Any increase in the range of percentages would also be subject to availability of resources.
SPPD/STS	598	
Subtotal	6 919[a]	
NON-CORE FUNDS		
Government cost-sharing	-	
Sustainable development funds GEF Capacity 21	2 500 of which: 2 000 500	
Third-party cost-sharing	1 000	
Funds, trust funds and other UNCDF UNSO	6 200 of which: 6 000 200	
Subtotal	9 700	
GRAND TOTAL	16 619[a]	

[a] Not inclusive of TRAC 1.1.2, which is allocated regionally for subsequent country application.

Abbreviations: GEF = Global Environment Facility; IPF = indicative planning figure; SSPD = support for policy and programme development; STS = support for technical services; TRAC = target for resource assignment from the core; UNCDF = United Nations Capital Development Fund; UNSO = UNDP Office to Combat Desertification and Drought.